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Mr. *ALLEYNE*'s
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
A S S I Z E S
I N
L E I C E S T E R,

March 28th. 1707.

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*Unanimity in the Truth a necessary Duty,
with the Means of obtaining it.*

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd at the
A S S I Z E S
H E L D A T
L E I C E S T E R
Before M^r. *Justice Gould*
March 28th. 1707.

By *JOHN ALLENE*, B.D. Rector of
Loughborough, and formerly Fellow of *Em-
manuel College in CAMBRIDGE.*

*Publiſh'd at the Request of the High-Sheriff, and
Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury.*

ἵνα μηκέτι ἄλλοι ἐκλυδιζόμενοι καὶ ἀειφερόμενοι παντὶ αἵματι τῆς δι-
δουκαλίας, ἐν τῇ κυρείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ ὡς τὴν μεθοδίαν
τῆς πλάνης. Ephel. 4. 14.

C A M B R I D G E :

Printed at the UNIVERSITY-PRESS, for *Richard Thurlbourne* Bookseller
in *Cambridge*, 1707.

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By JOHN ALLESTREE, B.D. Rector of
Loughborough, and formerly Fellow of
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Published at the Request of the High Sheriff, and
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The printer of these sermons is the printer of the
University, at the sign of the three crowns, in
St. Dunstons Church-yard.

C A M B R I D G E :

Printed at the University Press, for Richard Thompson, Bookseller,
in Cambridge. 1707.

TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
Clifton Pack, Esq;
High-Sheriff of the County of
L E I C E S T E R,
AND TO THE
HONORABLE GENTLEMEN
OF THE
GRAND-JURY.

THIS
DISCOURSE

is dedicated with all

Respect and Humility,

by their most Faithful

and Humble Servant,

JO. ALLETNE.

JO. ALLEN.

and Humble Servant
by their most Faithful

Respect and Humility,

is dedicated with all

DISCOURSE
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GRAND-JURY.

OF THE

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN

AND TO THE

LEICESTER

High-Sheriff of the County of

Clifton Park, Esq;

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

TO THE

ROM. XV. 5, 6.

Now the God of Patience and Consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ST. Paul's Example and Authority is very much recommended to us, as a powerful Instance of Christian Charity, as indeed it is, to instruct us all in a due compassionate compliance towards such as differ from us in *Opinion* and *Judgment*.

But certainly they abuse the Apostle's meaning by stretching it a great deal too far, who make use of his Writings or Practice in prejudice of the *Truth*, or a *firm unanimity in the Truth*. In things of an indifferent nature not setl'd by any Authority, which was the Case of the Mosaical Law at that time, He did, by the Council and Approbation of the Apostles, for the furtherance of the Gospel among the Jews, with whom He then liv'd, comply with the Judaizing Christians in the observation of legal Rites and Ceremonies, not as a part of Religion, as they did, but as things in themselves.

A

of

of an indifferent nature, not commanded, nor yet forbidden.

And as He was thus careful to walk charitably towards the Jews; so He was no less careful to walk charitably towards the Gentiles also. For if He
 Acts 16. 3. did Circumcise *Timothy* for fear of giving offence and scandal to the Jews, 'tis as well known, that
 Gal. 2. 3. He wou'd not Circumcise *Titus*, lest hereby He should give a real scandal to the Gentiles: and as He had the advice of the Apostles in the one Case, so he had their concurrence and approbation in the other: by which Practice he has given us this useful Lesson, to be tender and compassionate indeed to all such as are in error, in order to their instruction and better information; but still with that Prudence and Caution, as to give no just offence to such as embrace the Truth. We are then to do nothing against the Truth, but all for the Truth. The true Spirit of Christianity is to be charitable and compassionate unto all: but so to exercise our Charity towards such as are in error, as not to drive others into it. This was our Apostle's Care and Practice in all his condescensions, and if we pretend to imitate his example, it must be ours also.

St. *Pau'* was not shy in declaring his Opinion as to the Abrogation of the Mosaical Law. *I know,*
 Rom. 14. 14. *says He, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of its self.* Nay He calls them weak and infirm Christians, that were of a contrary Judgment. Altho' He had Bowels of Mercy and Compassion for such as did not understand their Christian Liberty, yet at the same time
 He

He shews his Charity towards them: He wou'd not encourage them in their Error, and much less discourage others from the Truth. His endeavours were always, and upon all occasions, to do the Office of a faithful Apostle, to declare the Truth according to Christ Jesus, to instruct every Body in the right way; that finally they might all come to be of one Mind and of one Judgment: and because when all is done, 'tis God alone that can make Men thus to be of one Mind; He directs his fervent Prayers unto Heaven, that He wou'd vouchsafe of his Mercy and Goodness to guide them all by his Holy Spirit, in the way of Truth and Unity. *Now the God of Patience and Consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I confess all Interpreters are not agreed in the same explication of these words of St. Paul. Some interpret them as importing no more than an *Unity of Charity or Forbearance of one another in differences of opinion*. Others again think they imply a great deal more; viz, an *Unity of Mind and Judgment in the Truth of the Gospel*. 'Tis not unlikely the Apostle might have an eye to both these senses, for He seems all along in this and the foregoing Chapter to recommend a mutual Charity and Affection, as the best way to bring them all at last to a closer Unity of Mind and Judgment. The words will admit both these Interpretations, and both are doubtless the Doctrine of St. Paul; but they that recommend the former exclusive of the latter, are much too narrow

for the full sense and meaning of our Apostle, as I hope will appear in the ensuing Discourse.

In treating on these words therefore I shall shew;

I. That there is an indispensable obligation upon all Christians to be of one Mind and of one Judgment.

II. That the Center of this Unity ought to be the word of God: We are all to be of one Mind and of one Judgment according to Christ Jesus.

III. As we are obliged to be Unanimous in the Truth of the Gospel, so I'll endeavour to shew you what particular Directions the Holy Scriptures have given us for the Attainment of this Christian Unity. *First,*

I am to shew: That there is an indispensable obligation upon all Christians to be of one Mind and of one Judgment. An Unity of Charity and Affection is Christian and praise-worthy; but 'tis not the only, nor yet the principal Unity that our holy Religion recommendeth to us. 'Tis the unhappiness of our times, that makes us apt to believe so. We have been so long accusom'd to Factions and Divisions in the Church of God, that at last we are almost grown insensible of the Evil of them. 'Tis so Universal a Distemper both with relation to time and place, that perhaps some may think it to be the true natural genuine State of the Church, and that we ought to proceed no further in our Sermons

mons and Exhortations to the People, than to press them only to an Unity of Affection and Charity: But we have not so learned Christ, nor been so ill instructed by our own Church, which teacheth us to pray that *all who confess Gods holy name may agree in the truth of his holy word, as well as live in unity and godly love.*

And this She learnt both from Christ and his Apostles too: for altho' our blessed Lord did not found his Church upon Earth in his own time, yet He prayed very Affectionately for it, just before He laid down his life upon the Cross. Now in this Divine Prayer, you may plainly see what a perfect Unity He intended to establish between the Members of it. For thus He prays in her behalf to his Heavenly Father. *Holy Father! keep thro' thine own Name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. Sanctify them thro' thy Truth: thy word is Truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me thro' their word, that they all may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one.* Joh. 17.

Now, can any one imagine, who considers these pathetical Expressions of our Lord, that the Unity He here so ardently prays for, can be any thing less than the most perfect Unity? viz. an Unity of Judgment, an Unity of Worship, an Unity of Affection, and even a Divine Unity. How can the Members of Christ's Church be one, as He and his Father is one, unless they be join'd together in the most intire Unity that can be? Do's

not our Lord pray that they may be perfected in one; and how can this possibly be done, but by the very Perfection of all Unity?

That this is the true sense and meaning of this divine Prayer, we shall not be unwilling to believe, if we reflect upon the Happy State and Condition of the first Christian Church that was planted in the World, which was at Jerusalem; the Members whereof, are not only said to continue steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread and in Prayer, but all this, with *one Accord* or *one Mind*. Nay such was the Perfection of their Unanimity, that the Holy Spirit expresseth it by their having *but one Heart and one Soul*.

ἁποφύμα-
δον. Acts 2.
46.
ἡ καρδία ἓ
ἡ ψυχὴ μία.
Acts 4. 32.

What words can express a greater Unity among Men than these? what can we say more of the most Unanimous Persons in the World, than that they have all but one Heart and one Soul? Do's not this imply, that the Members of this Church, were perfectly join'd together in the same Mind and in the same Judgment, and not only in the bonds of Charity and Affection? Nay might we not use the Expression of our Lord, and even say, they were perfected in one, as far as Humane Nature is capable of Perfection in this mortal State?

Here then you see a Christian Church as it were in Perfection: This is the true Pattern and Exemplar; by this Model we may know what a Church of God ought to be: This was the Original State of the Church, and happy had it been
for

for all Generations, had this continued to be the State of it to this very day. But the seeds of Division were soon sown in the Church of God, and were not long before they sprang up and appeared too. Our Blessed Saviour forewarned his Disciples of this in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares; so that we cannot be to seek whence all our Divisions come, 'tis our common Enemy that sows these Tares among us, He did it in the very Apostles days, and he will never cease to do it to the end of the World.

But what then? what if bad Men acted by this Evil Spirit will not keep *the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*? What if they do bandy into Factions and Parties, and rend the Church of Christ in pieces; shall the wickedness of Men cancel the obligation of God? Are not all Christians nevertheless obliged to be of one Heart and of one Mind, because some are so wicked that they will not do their Duty, as they ought to do? Must we corrupt and alter our holy Religion, because we our selves are not so holy as we ought to be? God forbid! The Truth of Religion is always the same, and all Christians ought to be Unanimous in it, whether they will do their Duty in this particular or no.

The Apostles themselves had plenty of Divisions in their times, as well as we have in ours; and yet they ceased not to exhort the People constantly to be of *one Mind and of one Judgment*; and that very affectionately too, as laying a great stress upon this Christian Duty. *Now I beseech you brethren, saies* 1 Cor. 1. *St. Paul, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that* 10.

ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment.

Eph. 4. 4.
&c.

Where you may see plainly, if you will take St. Paul's judgment: That an *Unity of Charity and Forbearance* is not enough, unless we proceed farther, and learn both to *think and speak the same thing too*. And indeed they seem not to understand the very nature of their Religion who talk otherwise: For in Christianity we find nothing but Unity. *One body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.*

Phil. 2. 1, 2.

Now how can Divisions be consistent with such a Religion? Nay how can we possibly reconcile them to one body? Are not the Members of the Natural Body closely knit together? Is there any Separation or Division among them; and is this Natural Union a true Image and Representation of our Spiritual Union? If it be; we must then conclude, that there ought to be no Division among the Members of Christ's Body, the Church, but that we ought all of us to agree together in all things, even in the most *perfect Unity*: For which Reason it is, that we find our Apostle so very vehement to this purpose in his Epistle to the *Philippians*. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Here

Here we have an entire Christian Unity expressed, one that comprehends an *Unity of Charity and Judgment too*; for so do's the Apostle interpret their being like-minded; not only that they should have the same Love one towards another, but also that they should be of *one Accord and of one Mind*.

Where we may observe that the Greek word is much akin to that which the holy Spirit maketh use of, for expressing the Unity of the first Christian Church at *Jerusalem*. For as the Members of that Church are said to have but *μία ψυχή*, one Soul; so are all Christians here commanded to be *σύμψυχοι*, of one Soul, Mind and Spirit, and so agree in the same happy Unity, as that Church did.

The Holy Scriptures then you see are plain and express as to my first Point: that all Christians ought to agree in the *same Mind*, and in the *same Judgment*. But how then you'll say, must we be all *Lutherans*, or must we be all *Calvinists*, or must we be all *Papists*, or what must we all be? What must be the Center of our Unanimity? To this I answer, nor *Luther*, nor *Calvin*, nor *Pope*, nor any Man upon Earth, no nor yet an Angel from Heaven, but the word of God, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For,

II. As we are obliged to be of one Mind and of one Judgment; so this Unity must be according to Christ Jesus. He is the *Way, and the Truth, and the Life*: He is the Captain of our Salvation: He has spoken to us in his Word, and his Word is the

Joh. 14. 6.

the Truth: Christ is our Head, and we ought not to follow any other; and his Word is the Truth, and we ought to hear nothing else: If we be Christ's Sheep, we must hear his Voice alone: What he has said is Truth, and in this Truth ought to be our Unity.

We ought to be instructed in no other Doctrine,
 Eph. 4. 21. but *as the Truth is in Jesus*: when we speak in
 1 Tim. 2. 7. religious Matters, we ought to *speak the Truth in*
Christ: he that carries not Christ's Truth in his
 Mouth is a deceiver, and we are not to hear him,
 whosoever he be. For as the Apostle has told us,
 he lies under the Curse and Malediction of God.
 If we, says St. *Paul*, or an Angel from Heaven
 preach any other Gospel, than what you have re-
 ceived, let him be accursed: and this is a Truth
 so much to be regarded, that our Apostle thought
 Gal. 1. 8, 9. fit to urge it again by a Second and more vehe-
 ment Asseveration. As I said before, so say I now
 again: if any Man preach any other Gospel unto
 you, than that ye have received, let him be accur-
 sed. And as the Truth of the Gospel is only to
 be preached; so the Truth of the Gospel ought
 2 Tim. 4. only to be heard: otherwise we *turn away from*
 4. *the Truth*, we *resist the Truth*, we do *err from*
 2 Tim. 3. *the Truth*. In this Truth we ought to be so
 8. unanimous, under Christ our Head, that no voice
 Jam. 5. 19. of Division should be heard among us; no not so
 much, as I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollos*, and I
 of *Cephas*, and I of *Christ*: For we have but one
 Head Christ Jesus, and to choose *Paul*, or *Apollos*,
 or *Peter*, or any other; be they what they will;
 whether an Apostle, or even an Angel of Light
 for

for our Head and Captain, is to divide Christ and break the Christian Unity.

As we are to hold nothing but the Truth, so we are to hold it only under one Head; and altho' we do keep firmly unto the Truth, and yet do not as firmly keep to our Head Christ Jesus; we are guilty of making Divisions in the Church of Christ, and that by the Doctrine of the Apostle *St. Paul*. 1 Cor. 1.
10, 11, 12.

They that make themselves Heads of Parties, and they that choose such Heads, are both equally Schismatical. The Apostles to be sure preaching all by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, spoke the same Truth; they that were for *Paul*, and they that were for *Apollos*, and they that were for *Cephas* heard nothing doubtless from any of them but the Truth of the Gospel, so that in that Respect they were not to be blamed; but their Fault lay here: whereas we have but one Head Christ Jesus, they chose unto themselves many Heads, and by so doing virtually renounc'd Christ their Head, violated his Right and Sovereignty, divided his Body into Factions and Parties, and upon that account were reprov'd and condemn'd by the Apostle. The Church is but one Body; and one Body can have but one Head: if we make several Heads, we must of necessity divide the Body: this we ought not to do our selves; nor be perswaded to follow any Man whatsoever in the way of Division, no not an Apostle, no not an Angel from Heaven. Nor powerful preaching, nor powerful praying, nor better Edifica-
C tion,

tion, nor having any Mans Person in admiration, no not if he speak as never Man spake, nor any thing of this nature can be a sufficient Plea for dividing the Body of Christ. We are obliged to hear the Truth, and we are obliged to hear it too in the way of Peace and Unity. This is the right way, and we ought all to walk in it with one accord.

'Tis every Mans indispensable Duty to walk in the way of Truth: they reject God who reject his Truth, and no Man certainly can have any Right to reject his Maker. The word of God then ought to regulate us all: By this we are to frame our *Judgments* and our *Actions* too. Is God the God of our *Wills* only, is he not the God of our *Understandings* also? He that thinks not according to the Truth of the Gospel, thinks not as he ought to think: and we may be as much in fault for *thinking wrong*, as for *doing wrong*. He that would please God, must be as careful to get a *right understanding*, as *conscientious to act according to his Judgment*.

¹ Joh. 3.
20.

Let Men set the *Power of Conscience* as high as they will, they must still remember that *God is greater than our heart; and knoweth all things*. If our judgments be not conformable to the Will and Mind of God declared in the Gospel; 'tis our indispensable Duty to regulate and reform them: for if we be negligent and remiss, an Erroneous Conscience will by no means excuse us.

To

To tell us therefore, as the *Author of the Rights of the Christian Church* do's, that every Man is under an indispensable obligation to worship God, after the Manner he thinks most agreeable to his Will, and in all Religious matters whatever to follow the Dictates of his own Conscience; without telling us that we are under a greater and more indispensable obligation to worship God after that particular Manner which he has declar'd to be his Will, looks very prophanelly; as if he was advancing Conscience above the Throne of God: and to say the very best of it, 'tis but telling us our Duty by the halves, and concealing the better half too.

This Author can not be ignorant what Extravagances Men have run into under a Colour of Conscience; and to talk at this loose Rate at This Time, can admit of no better an interpretation, than a manifest Design to let all Men loose to follow every Hypocritical Pretence of Conscience whatsoever, and run into all the excesses of a Religious Frenzy. We ought not to handle the word of God on this manner, but with the Apostles, *renounce all the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the truth, commend our selves to every Mans conscience in the sight of God.* The *Author of the Rights* has indeed commended Himself with a witness to every Mans Conscience; but how he has behaved himself with respect to the rest of the Character, is best known to God and his Own. If He means so well to the Church and Religion, as he pretends; 'tis to be hoped He'll explain himself better in the Se-

Δολῶντες τὸ
λόγιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.
2 Cor. 4. 2.

cond Part of his Book: and when he endeavours to perswade Men to follow the Dictates of their *own Conscience*; endeavour at the same time to perswade them to be careful to regulate their *Consciences by the Rule of Gods word*.

For he will do no service to God nor Religion, nor the Souls of Men, by perswading them absolutely without any farther Directions to follow the Dictates of their own Conscience. The holy Scriptures will inform him that there are *Evil Consciences*, *Defiled Consciences*, nay *Consciences seared with an hot iron*: And is he resolved to perswade Men to follow the Dictates of such Consciences as these? whether can they follow them but to the very pit of Destruction? And who then, I pray, is the best Friend, he that tells them, that they are under an indispensible obligation to follow the Dictates of them; or he that tells them, 'tis their indispensible Duty to purge, regulate and reform them?

Did not St. *Paul* in the very Height of all his Persecutions follow the Dictates of his own Conscience? Did not he then think *that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus*? And yet he ought not to have committed all these Outrages against the Church of Christ: Do's he not own that He was *a Blasphemer, a Persecutor*, and what not, for so doing? Our Blessed Saviour tells his Disciples, *that the time shou'd come when they that kill'd them shou'd think they did God Service*: and if not thinking harm by our selves wou'd excuse us, the very Crucifiers of our Lord wou'd be found innocent, when

when they committed the most barbarous wickedness, that ever was committed in the World: For they have the Testimony of Christ himself, that they knew not that they did Evil: *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.* Now what can we conclude from such Instances as these, but that a Man may think himself even into Hell; if he do's not take care to regulate his Thoughts by the Truth of the Gospel? Luke 23. 34.

'Tis a very plausible thing, I confess, to tell Men, that 'tis their *natural Right and Privilege*, and I know not what, *to worship God in their own way*, and to insinuate as if every body was for *Persecution*, that used not the same Language; but all this is mere Artifice and Colour: for the *Truth of the Gospel*, we are certain, is not for *Persecution*; but what Mens thoughts are or may be, is very uncertain. Some the *Author of the Rights* knows very well, who are for Persecuting all Hereticks even unto death: and how many more may think fit to follow their Example, if time shou'd serve, is more than he can pretend to tell. But be they never so many of a Persecuting Conscience, they are all under an indispensable obligation to Persecute: so that let any Man judge whether this Notion that this Author seems to be so very fond of, is ever like to do the World any Good. When all is done, 'tis the best way for us all to enquire for the *good Old way of Truth and Sincerity*, which Jesus Christ has reveal'd in his holy Gospel. This and nothing else can effectually save us all from Persecution: this has Christ directed us to walk in; and therefore in this we ought to walk unanimously,

nimously, which brings me to my last Particular. Which is to shew: *Thirdly*

III. What particular Directions the Holy Scriptures have given us for the Attainment of this Christian Unity. As to the Holy Scriptures being our Rule all *Protestants* are agreed: let our Differences of Opinion be what they will, we are all ready enough to appeal to the Authority of the Holy Scriptures in the defence of them. We agree then in the *Rule*, but we differ in the *Application* of it. Some interpret it one way and some another. What then must we do as to the *Interpretation of the Rule*? Who or what must be the *Interpreter*, for the *Interpretation of the Rule is really the Rule*?

Now here the *Author of the Rights* will have it; that we must of Necessity either choose a *Roman Infallible Guide*, or every Man follow his own *private Spirit*, and so be his own *Guide* and *Interpreter*. But we are not under such a necessity as he insinuates: for the Holy Scriptures direct us to a far better and more *Infallible Guide* to be our *Interpreter*, and that is the *Holy Spirit of God*, in whose Interpretation we ought all to agree. For

1 Cor. 12. 13. we are all baptized by this one Spirit into one Body; and as this one Spirit indited the Holy Scriptures, so it must interpret them too, or we can never understand them aright. 'Tis this Spirit that beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God, Jo. 16. 13. or we can never know that we are so. In like manner, 'tis this Spirit that guideth our Spirit in the Knowledge of the Truth, or we can never attain unto

unto saving Knowledge at all. For the word of Col. 1. 25.
 God is the word of the Spirit, containing the hid- 26.
 den things of God in a Mystery, and therefore 'tis Ephes. 3.
 a sealed Book to all those that are destitute of this 5. 9.
 Spirit. *What Man*, saies the Apostle, *Knoweth*
the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which 1. Cor. 2.
is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no 11.
man but the Spirit of God. 'Tis this Spirit which
 searcheth all things, *even the hidden things of God.* Kαὶ τὰ ἑλ-
 κὴ τῶν θεῶν
 And therefore St. Peter tells us in express words 1. Cor. 2. 10.
 that *no prophecy of the scripture is of any private* 2. Pet. 1. 20.
interpretation.

'Tis not then any Mans *Private Spirit*, but the
Spirit of God that must lead us all into Truth,
 and Peace and Unity. As to our own private
 Spirit, St. Paul will shew us we have no great rea-
 son to depend on that; for *the natural man receiveth*
not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are
foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; 1. Cor. 2.
because they are Spiritually discerned. 14. *Wit and*
Parts and Learning, even all the accomplishments
 of Nature and Study, are but the Φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός,
the Wisdom of the Flesh; and that we are assur'd
 can never guide us in the way of Truth and Salva-
 tion. 'Tis the Φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος *the Wisdom of*
the Spirit that must direct us here: *Because the*
carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not Rom. 8. 6.
subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 7.
 Carnal Wisdom puffeth up, but it edifyeth not,
 and therefore we are commanded not to think too Μὴ ὑπε-
 ρβεβαῖν.
 highly of ourselves, but to *think soberly as God* Rom. 12. 3.
hath dealt to every Man the measure of Faith. v. 16. Not
 to be wise in our own conceits. Not to lean to our Prov. 3. 5.
 own

1 Cor. I. 19. *own Understanding For it is written, I will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and will bring to nothing the Understanding of the Prudent.*

Prayer
for the
Church
Militant.

Hereby you may see that our own Natural Wisdom and Understanding will not do. We must labour and pray too for a better Spirit than our own, or we shall never make any good Progress in Religious Matters; we can never attain to Truth and Unity. And therefore our Holy Mother the Church hath taught us when we pray unto God, to *grant that all they who confess his Holy Name, may agree in the Truth of his Holy Word, and live in Unity and Godly Love:* to beseech him at the same time; that he wou'd *inspire continually the Universal Church, with the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Concord:* and herein She has faithfully followed the Directions of the Holy Scriptures, and given us a good Example for our pious Imitation. And we have this Encouragement from our Lord himself, that if we do ask we shall receive:

Luke 11. *For if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

We must therefore all learn to pray with Holy David, that God of his great Mercy wou'd vouchsafe to lead and guide us, that he wou'd instruct and teach us in the way which we ought to go, and not take away his Holy Spirit from us. And we must learn to pray too with the same Temper and Spirit as he did, with Humility, Meekness, and Faith: *For them that are Meek shall he guide.*
in

in Judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall he learn his way. May the God of Grace and Peace and Love inspire us all with such a Christian temper, as he will vouchsafe to lead in the way of Truth and Unity.

But are there not many false Spirits gone out into the World, and do not all Pretend to be the True One? Nay as to the Holy Spirit of God, the very best of Men have it but in measure: there is nothing perfect in this Life: a Mixture of Flesh and Spirit is to be found in all. The Apostles themselves had some Carnality, enough it seems to make differences among them: And what then shall we do when Reasonings are opposed unto Reasonings, and Spirit unto Spirit?

In these Cases *St. Paul* has taught us to appeal to the Holy Catholick Church which we believe in our Creed. For this is the House and Habitation of God, the chief Seat and Residence of his Holy Spirit, *the Pillar and Basis of Truth, * the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* By this Church we ought to try all our Differences: no particular Person, be He never so good, can be at all times secure of the Holy Spirit. *St. Paul* himself spake sometime by *Permission* and not always by *Command*, and well then may any of us, who cannot pretend to the Inspirations of an Apostle, doubt whether we have the Spirit of God or no in our Interpretations of Holy Scripture. The Church of God has a far more ample Promise of the Spirit than any private Person has: Here is the *πλήρωμα* the Fulness of the Spirit; whereas others have it only

¹ Tim. 3.
15.

Σπὺς καὶ
ἐδωκεν
τῆς ἀληθεί-

ας.
* Ephes. 1.

23.

1 Cor. 7. 6.

1 Cor. 7.

40.

in an inferior Degree and Measure: with good reason then ought every one to submit his Spirit and Reasonings too to the Judgment of the Church, as a Superiour Authority; this I say we may learn from the course of *St. Paul's* Arguments. He produces his Reasons for the Decency and Fitness of Womens praying in the Church cover'd and not uncover'd; and then because no Arguments be they never so cogent will perswade some Men, but they'l still be reasoning the Case for ever, he comes at last to the Judgment and Authority of the Church, as a superiour Argument to all Reasonings whatsoever, in which every Man ought finally to Acquiesce; *but if any Man seems to be Contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God.*

1 Cor. 11.
26.

To the *Catholick Church* then is the last and final Appeal; this ought to silence all our Disputes; we ought not to wrangle about the Sense and Interpretation of Holy Scripture, when the *Voice* or *Practice* of the *Church* has determin'd the Point; in this Case we only shew our selves to be cautious, and all our Reasonings are no better than vain Janglings.

And therefore let our Adversaries wrack their Wits and Inventions to the end of the World, against the *Divine Institution* of the *Ministry*, *Episcopacy*, the *Use of a Liturgy* or *Form of Prayer* in the publick Worship of God, and the *Power* of every particular Church, as to *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, for the decent and orderly performance of *Divine Service*, the *Voice and Practice* of the *Universal*.

versal Church of God in relation to all these Particulars, ought still to be of greater Moment with us, than all their Arguments put together, be they never so many; as long as we have the consent of all the Churches of God we are safe: *our Church* has followed the Spirit of God in his Church, and we ought to obey Her herein; and not go astray after the foolish Reasonings of Men: for to oppose the Church in a General Practice, is, to speak with * St. Austin, *a piece of most insolent madness*, no Private Spirit ought to do it.

Insolentissimæ Insaniz.
Epist. 118.
Cap. 5.

Let us not then leave the Pillar and Basis of Truth, to follow any single Person or Handful of Men whatsoever: be their Parts and Learning what they will, we know the Spirit of Truth and Unity to be *in the Church*: but we have no reason to expect it in *Separation from the Church*: fair and specious Colours may be put upon any Cause; and usually the worse the Cause is, the better we find it set off, in the Dress; but *Truth* needs no Ornaments. She has been *from the Beginning* and is *very Antient*, but still the *more lovely* for Her *Antiquity*.

She has appeared in *Every Age* of the Church, altho not in the same Degree of Lustre and Purity, every *Seet* and *Party* lay claim unto Her; but I think no Church this day upon Earth enjoys Her in greater Purity than the *Church of England*, in whose Communion we live. Her *Doctrine*, *Liturgy* and *Discipline* are all founded on the *word of God*, as interpreted by the *Holy*

Catholic Church, and they that will leave such an Authority to follow any Private Spirit whatsoever, do not follow the directions of the Holy Scripture, and 'tis no wonder then if they do go astray from the Paths of Truth and Unity.

Now the God of Patience and Consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one Mind, and one Mouth glorify God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: To Him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages world without End. Amen.



F I N I S.

